

Scripture

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EDITORIAL

Newman Lectures. The course for the coming scholastic year starting in October will be on all four Gospels with the larger share given to St John. This arrangement is in response to various requests for a more detailed treatment of the Gospels. The lectures will be given as usual at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London W1, but readers are asked to note that the day is Wednesday and not Friday as hitherto. The time, 6.30 p.m., is the same as before. Those interested should communicate with the Registrar at the above address. The first lecture will be given on 5 October.

Australian Biblical Association. We have now received more detailed information of this new Association which was founded at Sydney on the Feast of St Jerome, 30 September 1952. Its general aims are very much the same as our own, with greater stress on the needs of the professional Scripturist as distinct from the Catholic laity. Though founded in 1952, its activities were postponed till 1954 in order that all efforts might be concentrated on the great National Eucharistic Congress of 1953, which, as all know, was an enormous success. It so happened that also in 1954 a Theological Faculty was instituted in the Major Seminary of Sydney by Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities—and a memorable meeting of the Biblical Association was held that year at the Seminary on 3 November under the Presidency of His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney. Among the interesting points to notice are the expressed desire to maintain close ties with our Association here in England and the provision that members should automatically receive *Scripture*, our Quarterly. We deeply appreciate this and will do our best to reciprocate interest and co-operation. Cardinal Gilroy is Patron of the Association and Bishop Lyons and Bishop Carroll honorary Presidents. The executive comprises Rev. Dr Leonard (Chairman), Rev. Father W. Dalton, S.J. (Vice-Chairman), Rev. Dr H. Davies, D.Ph., L.S.S. (Secretary) and Very Rev. Father H. Johnston, S.J. (Editor). It may finally be added that Dr Leonard has himself had a great part in establishing this Association, and to him and all his fellow-workers we offer our hearty congratulations and good wishes for the future.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS—II. WADI MURABBA'AT

WADI MURABBA'AT

Some account of the remarkable discoveries in the Wadi Murabba'at in January and February 1952 has already been given in these pages.¹ A full account of the exploration and discoveries (which followed upon the original discovery of the caves by the Ta'amire Bedouin the previous October) has been presented by Père De Vaux² and certain interesting documents published.³

Four caves, situated in a most inaccessible place, were explored, and were found to contain remains dating back to the Chalcolithic period (4th millennium B.C.)—fragments of wood, bone, flint and rough pottery, which pointed to the practice of hunting and primitive agriculture. These remains were most prominent in the first two caves. There was evidence of a small settlement, the reason for which was unknown, in the Middle Bronze Age (18th–17th century B.C.), and again in Iron Age II (8th–7th century B.C.). Occupation of the caves was intense during the Roman period; large Roman jars or vases (none exhibiting the characteristic cylindrical form of the Qumran jars), iron and bronze weapons and tools, implements of wood, stone, leather and bone, were found. Twenty coins dating from this period were unearthed: three of the Roman procurators under Nero (A.D. 58–9), one from Ascalon (probably A.D. 84–5), one from Tiberias (struck under Hadrian, A.D. 119–20), nine of the Second Jewish War (A.D. 132–5), and two bronze pieces bearing the stamp "Legio X Fretensis". Finally, there was what the excavators call an Arab "visitation" in the 13th or 14th century A.D.: a coin of the Omayyads was proof of this. One last coin "of more recent date" was found.

Mss were abundant: of papyrus, leather, parchment, even paper, besides ostraca, or inscribed potsherds. The texts exhibited the greatest variety—Biblical texts, phylacteries, profane letters, contracts, literary and historical works, administrative, civil and military documents. The languages used were Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin and Arabic. The complete inventory of these mss, arranged in chronological order, is as follows:

1. Earliest in point of time is a small palimpsest papyrus (measuring

¹ See *Scripture*, v (1953), pp. 112–13; vi (1953), pp. 17–21.

² "Les Grottes de Murabba'at et leurs documents", in *Revue Biblique*, LX (1953), pp. 245–67.

³ "Quelques textes hébreux de Murabba'at", *ibid.*, pp. 268–75.

roughly 7 in. \times 3 in.) in Hebrew. The newer text contains certain names, e.g. Hoshea, Shemayahu, Yo'ezer, with signs appended; the older text, almost completely obliterated, seems to have been a letter, as the customary form of greeting and introduction can just be made out. Both texts are written in the ancient Phoenician script, and everything points to the conclusion that this script is really "archaic", not just "archaizing", or imitating the archaic, as might be true for the Leviticus fragments of Qumran (IQ). For the Qumran fragments were religious and Biblical, whereas these are profane; moreover, the script greatly resembles that of the famous Lachish ostraca (early 6th century B.C.), and the proper names retain their ancient form; finally, archaeology shows that the caves were occupied in the 8th-7th centuries B.C. The papyrus may, then, be credibly dated in the period of the decline of the Monarchy before the exile, say, towards the close of the 7th century B.C.

2. By far the most important finds consist of a long series of documents deposited in the caves at the time of the Second Jewish War, documents which, by and large, provide us with more historical information about this little-known period of Jewish history than all previous sources taken together.¹ They are, in fact, the first written documents of these Jewish insurgents that have come down to us.

In *Greek* we have two *papyrus* contracts, one, much torn, containing references to dowry and inheritance; the other, dated A.D. 124, relates to the reconciliation of husband and wife, Eleos and Salome by name; Palestinian place-names, e.g. Herodion and Gofna, are mentioned. Also on *papyrus* are two fragments in calligraphic script, the one a literary composition (probably religious), the other a historical work, treating, apparently, of the reign of Herod the Great, for it contains the names of his sister Salome and his wife Mariamne. Both these fragments have been also inscribed on the reverse in a cursive hand.

Also in *Greek* are *leather* and *parchment* fragments, apparently portions of administrative acts, civil or military; Jewish names (e.g. Josephus, Jesus, Saul, Simon), with signs and numbers appended, figure in the texts.

Among the *Semitic* texts are Biblical fragments, all of leather. There are various short fragments of *Genesis*, *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, which bear traces of violent handling; e.g. the fragment of Gen. xxxii-iv is just a long narrow strip torn from across three columns of an original scroll. Another fragment exhibits an empty column,

¹ These sources are the coins struck by the insurgents, the traditions of the Rabbis (not all historically trustworthy), and the brief details given by the Roman historian Dio Cassius and the Christian, Eusebius. They are all brought together and discussed in a recent work in Hebrew by S. Yeivin (*The War of Bar Kokhba*, Jerusalem 1952).

followed by the opening lines of the first column of the book of Isaias (1.4-14). A complete phylactery was found, in two separate pieces, both inscribed in tiny, yet very clear letters. The larger portion, a thin, irregular strip of leather, contains in order the three texts Ex. XIII.1-10 and 11-16 and Deut. XI.13-21. The other piece, about one-fifth the size, contains the *Shema* (Deut. VI.4-9). Both strips were folded and then wrapped in parchment torn from Greek mss, and the whole placed in a little bag, which is how they were found. With regard to the texts, it is known that the Rabbis prescribed the use of these four Biblical texts, but there was some dispute as to the order in which they were to be written. Eventually it was agreed that the *Shema* should be placed between Ex. XIII and Deut. XI. It will be recalled that the phylacteries found in the sixth cave of Qumran (6Q) also contained the Decalogue.

These Biblical texts are in full conformity with the Massoretic tradition, not only as regards the actual readings, but also in their orthography. For example, it was a rule of the Massoretes that, at the end of an "open section" (division of the text), a blank space should be left; this was usually the rest of the line, but, if the space left was less than would suffice to contain three words of three letters each, then the following line was left completely blank too. This is exactly the case with the fragment containing Ex. VI.7-9,¹ where verse 9 marks the close of such an "open section".

Semitic texts comprise also profane documents, private and administrative, on papyrus. Among these are an Aramaic contract dated in the 6th year of an era not yet determined, several fragments of contracts or letters in cursive script, not yet read, and a number of incomplete copies (with slight variations) of a Hebrew text in which the date is given according to the era of "the liberation of Israel by the ministry of Simeon ben Koseba, Prince of Israel". There are two letters from Ben Koseba himself (one of them has been published and is discussed below), and fragments of another letter possibly from the same source, together with a letter of "two administrators" (also published, and treated of below), and many other fragments not yet properly assembled and deciphered.

Ostraca dating from the same general period are fifteen in number, mostly Hebrew, but a few in Greek; as a rule, just a few letters or a single name are legible on each—but there is one large fragment which contains a list of proper names in Hebrew, beginning with Simeon

¹ *Revue Biblique*, LX (1953), p. 268 and plate XII a. The fragment of Isaias mentioned above is reproduced in *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, LXXXIV (1952), plate XXVIII, 3, and the phylactery, *ibid.*, 1. The smaller strip of the phylactery is also reproduced three times enlarged, in *Revue Biblique*, *loc. cit.*, plate XII b.

and followed immediately after by Eleazar, i.e. the leader of the Second Jewish revolt, and the Priest who figures together with him on coins etc. (*vide infra*).¹ On a large fragment of an amphora is inscribed the first part of the Hebrew alphabet, each letter being written twice (*cf.* the ostraca inscribed with the whole alphabet found in Khirbet Qumran in 1953).

3. The third group of documents comprises MSS of the 2nd century A.D. dating from after the Second Jewish War. There are two Greek papyrus MSS: one, apparently, a certificate of debt, dated "under the consulship of Stativius Severus" (i.e. A.D. 171), the other incomplete, in which occurs the name of the Emperor Severus (A.D. 180-92). Finally, there are fragments of a Latin document, which may be dated by its upright minuscule script to the middle of the 2nd century, and in which occurs the reading "C. Julius . . ." and the words "januarius, heredibus . . .".

4. From the Arabic period come several paper fragments, including one complete oblong piece of cotton paper, written on obverse and reverse. (It may be mentioned in passing that paper, originally a Chinese invention of about the 2nd century A.D., was introduced into Western Asia and then into Europe by the Arabs from the 7th century onwards.)

In previous articles, certain general conclusions bearing on Jewish history and Hebrew script and on the text of the Old Testament, have been suggested on the basis of these documentary discoveries from the Wadi Murabba'at. The Wadi Murabba'at itself was apparently an outpost of the insurgents in the war of A.D. 132-5; in fact it was the headquarters of Yeshua ben Gilgola, one of Bar Kokhba's lieutenants. It was eventually taken by the Romans and pillaged—it was very likely they who tore the biblical scrolls—and then turned into a military outpost (hence the Greek papyri and the small Latin text). As regards Hebrew script, these dated Semitic documents of Murabba'at provide a most useful term of comparison for judging the date of the Qumran and similar MSS—the Qumran script is clearly older. The complete conformity of the Murabba'at biblical fragments with the Massoretic tradition points to the stabilisation of the Hebrew text early in the 2nd century A.D. (see the conclusion of my previous article). Several types of "hand" may be distinguished in the Semitic non-Biblical texts: a calligraphic hand (for literary texts), a style used in official documents, and a cursive script employed in letters and daily private use. Another interesting point is the employment of the language of the later Jewish Rabbis, referred to as "Mishna Hebrew", in certain

¹ Father De Vaux also mentions a Hebrew text of 12 incomplete lines, in three fragments, which may be the same as this text (*loc. cit.*, p. 261; *cf.* p. 292).

documents, e.g. the letter of the "two administrators" mentioned below. It follows that this type of Hebrew was not simply an artificial language of the Scribes, as many believed, but was used—in preference to the current Aramaic—if not in daily use, at least in official documents of the time.

LETTER OF TWO ADMINISTRATORS

The first of two documents from Murabba'at published in the *Revue Biblique* is the so-called "Letter of Two Administrators", which throws interesting light on daily life during the Jewish Revolt of A.D. 132-5. It is complete, written on a piece of papyrus measuring approximately 6 in. × 8 in., in clear regular script, apart from the six signatures at the end, which vary, owing to the different hands. The language is relatively pure "Mishna Hebrew". The following version is substantially that of Père De Vaux in *Revue Biblique* :

"The administrators of Beit Mashkô—Yeshua and Eleazar—to Yeshua ben Gilgola, chief of the army, greeting ! Be it known to you concerning the cow that Joseph ben Ariston wants to buy (?seize Heb *laqah*) from Jacob ben Juda, who lives in Beit Mashkô, that it really belongs to him (i.e. Jacob), as everyone knows.

What is more—alas !—the gentiles are drawing close to us. I would have gone up and rendered you assistance—yet, because you ever send good news, I did not do so.

Farewell to you and all the house of Israel !

Yeshua ben Eleazar wrote this.

Eleazar ben Joseph wrote this.

Jacob ben Juda—for himself.

Saul ben Eleazar, witness.

Joseph ben Joseph, witness.

Jacob ben Joseph, witness."

This letter—undated—is an official statement¹ by the two Jewish administrators or prefects² of the town of Beit Mashkô, which, during the period of the Second Jewish War, came under the civil and military jurisdiction of Yeshua ben Gilgola, whose headquarters were in the Wadi Murabba'at. The exact location of Beit Mashkô has not been determined, but it was very likely situated in Nabatean country to the south of Juda (for many Nabatean place-names end in

¹ Other commentators speak of a "juridical testimony" (*sefar eduth*), a technical term found in the Mishna : vide O. H. Lehmann and S. M. Stern, in *Vetus Testamentum*, III (1953), pp. 391-6, cited in *Biblica*, XXXV (1954), p. 134.

² "Parnasim", prefects of Jewish communities, according to the Mishna : cf. Lehmann and Stern, *loc. cit.*

δ). If so, it follows that Yeshua, in his capacity as civil governor and military chief, was responsible for a wide area, and hence that Bar Kokhba's revolt was far-reaching and achieved temporary control over an extended territory.

In the first part of the letter, these two officials testify, in the presence of three witnesses, whose signatures are appended,¹ that a certain cow is really the property of Jacob ben Juda (who also signs). Two possible reasons may be assigned for this official testimony. Perhaps Jacob was about to sell the cow to Joseph, when he learnt that someone at Ben Gilgola's headquarters had claimed it as his own. On the other hand, taking the Hebrew verb *lqh* in the general sense of "take", it could be that Yeshua himself, thinking that the cow did not really belong to Jacob, but had been seized by him in the fortunes of war, wished to commandeer it for his troops. However that be, the document reveals a somewhat disturbed state of affairs during the last year or so of the Jewish Revolt.

The second part of the letter, in fact, suggests a state of affairs towards the end of Bar Kokhba's short-lived reign, when the Roman legions were beginning a determined move into the Judean highlands. It is written in the first person singular; apparently only one of the officials is speaking, probably the one who was also military governor—unless we can conceive the two officials acting as one. He had heard rumours of the approach of the Romans ("gentiles"), and hence wished to send reinforcements from his outpost to the garrison at Murabba'at; but, since Yeshua had given no intimation of danger in his regular dispatches, he had refrained from doing so.² A customary salutation closes the letter, and then follow the signatures of the two officials, of the individual Jacob ben Juda, and of three witnesses, each in his own handwriting—eloquent testimony to a fairly general knowledge of writing at this period. The script in these signatures exhibits the greatest possible variety; some letters are like those of 1QIsa or the Nash papyrus, others like those of 1st century A.D. inscriptions, others resemble Nabatean, Arabic, or even medieval Jewish script!

¹ Lehmann and Stern (*loc. cit.*) explain that the first two witnesses were those required by Jewish Law. The third was added to testify either that the contents of the document were true and accurately recorded, or that the signatures appended were genuine.

² Lehmann and Stern (*loc. cit.*) so render this document that it all refers to the one subject of the ownership of Jacob ben Juda's cow. They translate "... Be it known to you that the cow which Joseph ben Ariston is about to receive from Jacob ben Juda... that it is his, from the spoils. Moreover, if the Romans were not near to us, I would have gone up and urged you in this matter, lest you say I did not go up to you, on account of... (reason uncertain: probably "notwithstanding my strength"). Peace on you and on all the house of Israel!"

LETTER OF SIMEON BEN KOSEBA

Of the two letters of the leader of the Second Jewish Revolt found in Murabba'at, the first¹ is in a legible script, which, however, betrays the hand of one not accustomed to writing. The other (not yet published) is in a different hand altogether, that of a skilful writer, probably Bar Kokhba's secretary. Moreover, since the concluding signature of the first letter is in the same style as the body of the epistle, the whole must come from the hand of the great leader himself—a conclusion confirmed by the urgency of the message it contains. The letter is written on good papyrus, about a third the size of the letter of the Two Administrators, but the document is slightly damaged at the bottom, and there is a thin vertical slit to the right which cuts out one or two letters, most of which, however, can be restored fairly plausibly. Bar Kokhba writes to his subordinate Yeshua ben Gilgola, the same chief of Murabba'at to whom the previous document was addressed:

"From Simeon ben Koseba to Yeshua ben Gilgola and the men of your company, greeting! I call heaven to witness against me that, if you do not break off (relations) with the Galileans whom you have liberated each and all, I will have you clapped in irons (lit., will put fetters on your feet), as I have done already with Ben Aphlul.

Simeon ben Koseba, Prince of Israel".

This remarkable letter, penned by the hand of the great Jewish leader himself, was obviously written in haste and in anger. After a brief opening salutation to Yeshua and his "staff-officers", Ben Koseba administers a stern rebuke to his subordinate. He takes an oath, calls heaven to witness, "heaven" being a circumlocution for God, commonly met with in 1 *Maccabees*, in the Talmud and elsewhere.² He swears he will deal drastically with Ben Gilgola, even as he has dealt already with a certain refractory Ben Aphlul, if he does not obey orders. The reason for his anger is indicated in line 4, the exact interpretation of which is uncertain, on account of the somewhat compressed style and the fact that one letter of the verb is missing. It reads literally, "and break off (supplying *q* to give the verb (*w*)*psq*)"³

¹ J. T. Milik: "Une lettre de Siméon Bar Kokheba", in *Revue Biblique*, LX, (1953), pp. 295-304.

² cf. the expression "kingdom of heaven", for "kingdom of God", in St Matthew's gospel. A fuller form of the oath, invoking "heaven and earth" is found in Deut. iv.26, in some of the Qumran texts and in the Talmud.

³ E. Vogt suggests the reading *pss*, i.e. "strike (the Galileans)", which would favour even more strongly Milik's second interpretation. (*Biblica*, XXXIV (1953), p. 421).

from the Galileans whom you have liberated, every one". This could mean, "break off your quarrel", cease quarrelling, be reconciled with the Galileans. These would be Galileans who had fought for Bar Kokhba in their native territory, and, after the failure of operations there (as mentioned in the Talmud and Dio Cassius), fled south to Judea, where they were rescued from the Roman legions by Ben Gilgola. Then, as so often, disagreement and quarrels broke out between Judean and Galilean, leading to a kind of local "schism", which Bar Kokhba wants to see mended as soon as possible. On the other hand—a view that Milik favours—these "Galileans" might be none other than Christians, Jewish Christians of Palestine. We may imagine that, at the beginning of the revolt in A.D. 132, the Christians assumed an attitude of neutrality (as in the First Revolt of A.D. 66), but the swift initial success of the insurgents, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem, prevented their taking flight to non-Jewish regions (as they had fled to Pella before the catastrophe of A.D. 70). So they carried out literally the advice of their Master, "then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains" (Mt. xxiv.16), and took refuge in the Wilderness of Judea, to the west of the Dead Sea. Unfortunately for them, it was this very region that remained under the control of the insurgents till the very end of the war. For some time, however, they remained unmolested—simply exchanging the rule of Imperial Rome for that of a Jewish military government, which issued its own coinage, inaugurated a new "era" dating from the capture of Jerusalem ("era of the liberation of Israel (Jerusalem)") and drew up its contracts and official documents in the name of "Simeon, Prince of Israel".

In the third year of the Revolt (A.D. 134-5)—from which period this letter, and most of the other MSS of the insurgents seem to date—the Emperor Hadrian drafted in new legions, and brought the best general of the Empire (Julius Severus) from Britain to command them.¹ The Romans began a determined advance into the Judean mountains (*cf.* the previous letter of the two administrators), and Bar Kokhba, on his side, sent round his agents with orders to organise resistance everywhere, and to prevail on all Jews, by violence if need be, to fight for Israel and for himself, Israel's "Messiah". It is a matter of history that the influential Rabbi Aqiba had saluted the Jewish leader as the Messiah, the "Star" of Balaam's prophecy (Num. xxiv.17)—hence his popular title, "Bar (Ben) Kokhba", literally, "Son of a Star" (*vide infra*). A star is also represented above the Temple on coins of the Second Revolt bearing his name. On the same coins, as in this letter and other documents of Murabba'at, he assumes the title "Prince of Israel",

¹ It is said he even visited Palestine in person. For this and other details of the Revolt, see G. Ricciotti, *Histoire d'Israel*, II., pp. 575-81.

which also has Messianic significance.¹ Christians were face to face, then, with a difficult situation; as Jews, they had no particular sympathies with Hadrian's legions, yet, precisely because of Bar Kokhba's Messianic pretensions, they could not—without denying their Master—throw in their lot with him. It seemed, indeed, as if the "end of times", foretold by Jesus, was at hand—for there were "signs" of wars and rumours of wars, flight, persecution, false prophets and false Messiahs. That Bar Kokhba did, in fact, persecute the Christians is stated by Eusebius and Justin; the latter says in his *Apology*, I, 31, "For even in the late Jewish War, Barcochebas, the ringleader of the Jewish revolt, commanded that Christians should be dragged to cruel tortures unless they would deny Jesus to be the Christ and blaspheme Him". Some of Bar Kokhba's lieutenants—Ben Aphlul and Ben Gilgola, in the present instance—evidently sheltered the Christians from his agents; hence his fierce anger against them.

True, there is no historical evidence of the use of the term "Galileans" to designate the Christians before the time of Julian the Apostate (4th century). Yet there seems no reason why the expression should not have been so used (with a suggestion of contempt) by the Jews of Judea, in the restricted milieu of Jewish circles. Certainly the apostles were known and spoken of as "Galileans" on the Day of Pentecost (Acts II.7), and a similar term, "Nazarene", was used by the Jews who accused Paul before Felix's tribunal (Acts XXIV.3); it is also found in the Talmud.

Coming now to the signature at the end of the letter, it seems that the form of the Jewish leader's name—Ben Koseba—given here in his own handwriting, and found elsewhere in the documents of Murabba'at, is undoubtedly the original and correct one. The form given in the Talmud, "Ben (Bar) Kozba (or Koziba)"² is apparently a phonetic spelling, based on hearsay. The name given in Christian sources, Bar Kokhba (Greek, Cochebas) is simply the Messianic title ("Son of a Star") whereby he was saluted by his soldiery in the course of the holy, apocalyptic war—a title sanctioned, too, by Rabbi Aqiba. The etymology and signification of "Ben Koseba" are uncertain. "Ben" (Aramaic "Bar") does not necessarily signify "son of" in the literal sense. It sometimes refers to place of origin (e.g. Ben Daroma, mentioned in Rabbinic sources as one of the leaders of the Second

¹ On the Messianic sense of these titles, as shown in the documents of Qumran and elsewhere, see my previous article. Associated with Bar Kokhba in his Messianic claims, was "Eleazar the Priest", named on coins and on an ostrakon found at Murabba'at—he was probably his uncle, Eleazar of Modin, mentioned in rabbinic sources.

² Kozba seems to be the original form. Koziba (Kozebe), apparently an Aramaicised form of the Hebrew participle *kozeb*, i.e. liar, would be a defamatory form used by later Rabbis to express their contempt for the "Messiah" who had failed.

Revolt), or even designates simply "bearer of such-and-such qualities", like the title "Boanerges" ("sons of thunder") applied to James and John, sons of Zebedee, in the Gospels. Milik prefers this third signification, not only for Ben Koseba, but also for Ben Aphlul and Ben Gilgola.¹

To sum up, this valuable letter sheds new light on Ben Koseba's movement, its extent and organisation; it gives us the original form of the leader's name, obscured in the Talmud, and complicated by Christian references; it gives us, almost certainly, Ben Koseba's own handwriting; and finally, as Milik does not hesitate to affirm, it is "the most ancient archaeological document testifying to the presence of Christians in Palestine".²

It will also be remembered that, according to preliminary reports mentioned in a previous article,³ other material dating from the time of the Second Revolt was found by the Bedouin in caves situated in a region not yet certainly identified, in August 1952. As stated, this material comprised coins, Biblical fragments (including *Genesis*, *Numbers* and *Psalms*, fragments of a parchment roll of a Greek text of the minor Prophets (the new "recension" according to the Hebrew), a complete phylactery, a series of Nabatean papyri (under study by Abbé J. Starcky), and, finally, a Hebrew letter addressed to Simeon Ben Koseba, and two Aramaic documents dated "in the third year of the liberation of Israel in the name of Simeon ben Koseba". The full description and publication of these new documents will be awaited with interest.

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¹ Koseba, Milik thinks, would derive from a root (*Kusbara*), common to many languages, and meaning "coriander seed". Gilgola might derive from a similar word meaning "eyeball"—hence, "one with protruding eyes"!

² Other archaeological documents are uncertain and problematic, e.g. the Talpiyoth ossuaries, found by Sukenik near Jerusalem in 1945, on one of which was a crude cross, accompanied by two Greek words meaning "Jesus, woe" or "Jesus, alas"!

³ See *Scripture*, vi (1953), p. 20.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

Since this article was written, several treatments of the "Letter of the Two Administrators" have appeared from the pens of Jewish scholars. Though differing in detail of translation, all emphasize the strictly legal character of the document, and agree that it treats of one matter only, viz. the ownership of the cow; the legal attestation was despatched in lieu of a personal visit to Ben Gilgola, which the approach of the Romans rendered impractical.

Other translations of Bar Kokhba's letter have appeared: it has been suggested that the crucial phrase should read, ". . . if a single one of the Galileans *whom I rescued, is harmed* . . ."

A further legal document from Murabba'at has been published in *Revue Biblique*. It is in Aramaic, and concerns the sale of a house for eight silver denarii (about £1 of our money): the boundaries are stipulated, the whole house, "all the stones, beams and bricks from the roof to the ground," is made over, but not the courtyard adjoining. Finally, the document is countersigned by the seller's wife, who renounces all her claims on the property!

J. Starcky has published one of his Nabatean documents (see last paragraph of article), which testifies to the close relations existing between Jews and Nabateans before the First Revolt of A.D. 66-70.

DAILY BIBLE READING WITH THE CHURCH¹

I

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance and fruitfulness of reading Holy Scripture daily is a fact that needs no proof. It is a practice that continues to grow more widespread among the faithful, a spiritual exercise valued ever more highly by priests and religious. The Holy See has given clergy and people alike every encouragement to steep their souls in the word of God in order to find there a pure and never-failing source of divine truth and spiritual strength. It is hoped that the reading plan suggested here will prove helpful in bringing this aim nearer its fulfilment. The two-year cycle of readings for the Old Testament is based on the Church year, while the New Testament plan presents the various books in their approximate order of composition. Although originally intended as an aid in planning the daily public reading of the Scriptures in religious communities, it will serve equally well as a guide for private Bible-reading.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

A Two-year Cycle Based on the Church Year

First Year

Book	Days	Book	Days
ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE		AUGUST	
<i>Isaías</i>	45	<i>Proverbs</i>	19
		<i>Song of Songs (Canticle of Canticles)</i>	3
		<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	6
SEPTUAGESIMA AND LENT		SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER	
<i>Genesis</i> I-IV ; VI-IX ; XI-XXV ; XXXVII-		II <i>Paralipomenon</i>	27
I	39	I <i>Esdras</i>	7
<i>Job</i>	21 (22)	<i>Nehemias</i> (II <i>Esdras</i>) I-II ; IV-X ;	
<i>Exodus</i> I-XXXVI ; XXXIX-XL	33	XII-XV	10
		II <i>Machabees</i>	18

¹ Reprinted with permission from *Sponsa Regis*, XXIII (1952) m No. 6.

DAILY BIBLE READING WITH THE CHURCH

Book	Days	Book	Days
EASTERTIDE AND AFTER		NOVEMBER	
<i>Leviticus</i> I-X; XII; XVI; XIX; XXI-XXVII	17	<i>Michaeas</i>	4
<i>Numbers</i> V-VI; VIII-XIV; XVI-XXV; XXVII-XXXII; XXXV-XXXVI	20	<i>Sophonias</i>	2
<i>Josue</i> I-XI; XVIII; XXII-XXIV	12	<i>Habacuc</i>	2
<i>Judges</i>	20	<i>Daniel</i>	15
<i>1 Kings</i> (I <i>Samuel</i>)	25	<i>Abdias</i>	1
<i>1 Paralipomenon</i> X-XXII; XXVIII-XXX	11	<i>Aggaeus</i>	1
		<i>Zacharias</i>	7

Second Year

Book	Days	Book	Days
ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE		JULY-AUGUST	
<i>Psalms</i>	45	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>	40
		<i>Wisdom</i>	13
SEPTUAGESIMA AND LENT		SEPTEMBER	
<i>Deuteronomy</i> I-XXI; XXVI-XXXIV	28		
<i>Jeremias</i>	46 (47)	<i>Judith</i>	11
<i>Lamentations</i>	4	<i>1 Machabees</i>	23
<i>Baruch</i>	6		
EASTERTIDE AND AFTER		OCTOBER-NOVEMBER	
<i>Ruth</i>	3	<i>Jonas</i>	2
<i>II Kings</i> (II <i>Samuel</i>)	22	<i>Amos</i>	5
<i>III Kings</i>	24	<i>Osee</i>	6
<i>IV Kings</i>	25	<i>Nahum</i>	2
<i>Tobias</i>	7	<i>Ezechiel</i>	39
<i>Esther</i>	9	<i>Joel</i>	3
		<i>Malachy</i>	2

Neither a plan of daily Old Testament readings nor one patterned on the Church year is a novelty. Examples of the former can be found in many editions of the Bible. The best-known example of the latter is the Roman Breviary. It provides Old Testament readings for each season and period of the Church year, except for the two periods devoted especially to commemorating "Christ with us"—the seasons of Christmas and Easter, when the regular Scripture readings are taken from the New Testament.

But there are several reasons for suggesting a new reading programme. The readings given in the Breviary, on the one hand, are necessarily fragmentary and very incomplete. For as its name suggests, this official prayer book of the Church is designed as a comparatively brief compact manual of daily prayer. So in its Bible readings it aims at covering only the high points of Old Testament

history, prophecy and doctrine, and their fulfilment and perfection in the New Testament, that is to say, in Christ. Thus, even for those who recite the Divine Office, it would be of great benefit to have the Old Testament read in full, and over and over through the years, like the Breviary itself. The Bible, too, could then become a vade-mecum, growing ever more familiar, and as a result the Breviary readings and especially the *Psalms* would take on new richness and meaning. Moreover, it is very difficult if not impossible to gain a satisfactory understanding or appreciation of the New Testament without first acquiring a close familiarity with the no less divinely inspired Old Testament. For the New Law has been built on this Old Law, which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil (cf. Mt. v.17-18).

On the other hand, the various arrangements of the Old Testament for daily reading suggested in the editions of the Bible usually take the sacred books in the Bible's own order, from *Genesis* to *Machabees*. As a result the books are left entirely unrelated to the Church's programme of Bible-reading in the Divine Office, a programme that is sensitive to the changing seasons of the liturgical year. Moreover, considering the length of the Old Testament, such plans tend to be somewhat burdensome, particularly as guides for public reading. The time itself would perhaps not seem long if the whole Old Testament were graphic narrative, like the book of *Tobias*, or the book of *Genesis*. But there are the numerous chapters of Mosaic Law, the profound and mysterious oracles of the prophets, and the long series of maxims and proverbs presented in the didactic or wisdom books. Even when read privately, these portions of Scripture lend themselves best to leisured and reflective reading. This difficulty of length can hardly be met satisfactorily unless the Old Testament readings are distributed over a two-year period.

In the plan presented here each day's public readings will not take more than seven or eight minutes. The aim has been to include a reasonably complete account of Old Testament history in the first year of the cycle, and along with this as large a sampling of the prophetic and wisdom books as there is time for. For example, I and II *Paralipomenon* are read instead of II, III and IV *Kings*, since the period covered is the same, but I and II *Paralipomenon*, being considerably briefer, allow more time for the reading of non-historical books. For this same reason, books like *Deuteronomy*, *Ruth* and *Tobias*, which are somewhat supplementary to the other historical books, are also reserved for the second year. During the second year there are much lengthier readings from the prophets than during the first, but much shorter ones from the historical books. Interestingly, though, many if not all of the prophecies contain reflections on sacred history or

details not given in the general account. The reading of *Jeremias* and the *Lamentations*, for example, gives a much clearer picture of the destruction of Jerusalem and the events which preceded it than do either *Kings* or *Paralipomenon*. Similarly, *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus* present many striking reflections on Jewish history.

It remains now to indicate how the plan outlined above follows the general lines which the Church has adopted in the Breviary. The first series of readings begins with *Isaias*, the glory of the Old Testament and the greatest of its prophets, whose message keynotes the Church's Advent preparation and even her Christmas celebration, as can be seen in both the Breviary and the Missal. Then comes *Genesis*, the opening of sacred history—the history of mankind's salvation, which is sacramentally re-enacted each liturgical year. (In the Divine Office *Genesis* is begun on Septuagesima Sunday, at the start of the Easter cycle.) *Job*, who foreshadows the suffering Christ, is read during Lent,¹ and then *Exodus*, which is appropriate for both Lent and Easter, since it opens with the first Pasch or Passover and the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. The historical account continues with *Leviticus* and *Numbers*, *Josue* and *Judges*, *I Kings* and *I Paralipomenon*, until August, which the Church devotes to the wisdom books (here *Proverbs*, the *Canticle of Canticles* and *Ecclesiastes*). Then there is a return to sacred history with *II Paralipomenon*, *I* and *II Esdras* and *II Machabees*.

This unfolding of the history of God's chosen people is both an image and a beginning of the Church's own development and destiny in time and eternity and in each year and era of her existence. The New Israel, the Kingdom of God, is the reality pointed to by the Jewish race under its kings. The growth and flowering of that earlier kingdom take on new meaning in the light of the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost. The kingdom's subsequent decline, the overthrow and restoration of Jerusalem and its temple, and the Machabean wars, all preparing the way for Messianic times, typify the Church's struggles, reverses and renewal, and her expectation of Christ's return in grace (at Christmas) and in glory (at the end of time). *Leviticus* and the other books of Mosaic Law lay the groundwork of the New Law of grace and love, while the wisdom literature affords us a better insight into the new life that is ours in Christ, who is eternal Wisdom.

November is the month of the prophets, leading up to *Isaias* at Advent. In their writings Old Testament revelation reaches its climax, for they present its most sublime moral and doctrinal instructions and speak most clearly of the coming Redeemer. Here as nearly as possible

¹ In the Breviary *Job* is read during September as a figure of the trials and struggles of the Church.

the chronological order has been followed: *Michaeas*, *Sophonias* and *Habacuc* (before the deportation and exile of the Jews); *Daniel* (during the exile at Babylon); *Abdias*, *Aggaeus* and *Zacharias* (after the exile). These are prophets of the southern kingdom (Juda) and are included here because the history of the northern kingdom (Israel) is detailed only in III and IV *Kings*, which are read during the second year.

The second year begins with the book of *Psalms*, a book of prayers rather than readings, yet appropriate as Advent reading instead of *Isaias*, considering its numerous prophecies of the Messiah, His redemptive work, and His Kingdom, the Church (the Messianic Psalms, as they are called).¹ Next is *Deuteronomy*, wherein Moses before his death recalls the whole history of the Passover and the prescripts of the Law given from Mount Sinai. Then during Lent come *Jeremias* and his *Lamentations*, followed by the prophecy of his disciple *Baruch*. Sacred history is then resumed with *Ruth* (corresponding to the period of *Judges*), II, III and IV *Kings* (corresponding to I and II *Paralipomenon*, but giving the history of the northern as well as the southern kingdom of the Jews), *Tobias* and *Esther* (reflecting the period of the exile and after). July as well as August of the second year are devoted to wisdom readings (*Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*), with *Judith* and I *Machabees* following in September. This leaves October and November for the reading of the remaining prophets of both the northern and southern kingdoms. And again an effort has been made to take them in chronological order: *Jonas*, *Osee* and *Nahum* (before the exile); *Ezechiel* (during the exile); *Joel* and *Malachy* (after the exile).

One further suggestion. It will prove a refreshing change and an aid to attention and understanding if these readings (and those in the New Testament) are done in Mgr Ronald Knox's version (published in three volumes by Sheed & Ward).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Chronological Arrangement

Book	Days	Book	Days
I Thessalonians	5	Acts	45
II Thessalonians	3	Jude	1
James	5	I Peter	5
Matthew	48	Hebrews	15
Galatians	6	I Timothy	6
I Corinthians	21	Titus	3

¹ Cf. Lk. XXIV. 44-7 ("... all that was written of Me in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms . . ."). It is as the Church's prayer *par excellence*, not as readings, that the entire *Psalter* is said each week in the Breviary. But even those who recite the Divine Office will find it useful to read the *Psalms* again in the vernacular, while for others the *Psalter* will be quite indispensable as part of their general Bible-reading.

DAILY BIBLE READING WITH THE CHURCH

Book	Days	Book	Days
II Corinthians	14 (15)	II Timothy	4
Romans	20	II Peter	3
Mark	30	I John (Epistle)	5
Colossians	4	John (Gospel)	36
Ephesians	7	II John	1
Philemon	1	III John	1
Philippians	4	Apocalypse	22
Luke	50		

It is comparatively easy to read the whole New Testament within a year, and three or four minutes of public reading daily will be sufficient for following the plan given here. With the New Testament, plans for daily readings are a great deal more numerous (and probably more widely used) than for the Old. And while any one of them can very profitably be followed, the outline given here may prove somewhat more helpful, since it takes the books in their chronological order.

This difference should not be exaggerated, however. The chronology of the New Testament writings is difficult to establish exactly, and often a close estimate is the most that can be obtained. Then, too, the New Testament itself presents many of the books in their order of composition.¹ Still, there are two advantages in a more chronological arrangement of the New Testament. It should certainly be helpful in interpreting and understanding the different books to have them read, as far as possible, in the order in which they were written. Secondly, passing back and forth from the didactic or doctrinal books (the Epistles) to the historical (the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles) and finally to the prophetic (the *Apocalypse*), from the Pauline to the non-Pauline writings, gives the reading of the New Testament some of the variety the Church's reading-plan for the Old Testament possesses.

The only direct connection this reading arrangement has with the liturgical year is that it ends with the prophetic *Apocalypse* (which parallels the Sunday Masses and Breviary texts for November) and begins with I and II *Thessalonians*, which, in emphasizing Christ's second coming, fit in well with the Mass of the First Sunday of Advent.

¹ The four Gospels, for example, were composed in that order, St John's three Epistles and the *Apocalypse* very likely came last. Among St Paul's Epistles, *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, *Philippians* and *Philemon* were written during his imprisonment at Rome and so are fittingly grouped together in the Bible. But St Paul's earliest Epistles, I and II *Thessalonians*, are given eighth and ninth. *Galatians* consists of an earlier or rough-draft presentation of the theme that is fully developed in *Romans*, namely, justification, or how mankind attains salvation. Yet *Romans* stands first (by reason of its dignity and importance) and *Galatians* fourth. And though the Gospels are arranged in the order in which they were written, the composition of each of them was separated from the others by the writing of a number of the Epistles.

Otherwise, except for individual chapters scattered over the whole New Testament, no single book is really more appropriate for any particular week or season of the Church year than another.

It is true that in the Divine Office the Pauline Epistles are read at Christmas-time, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *Apocalypse* and the Catholic Epistles are read after Easter. But these readings obviously comprise the whole New Testament, with the exception of the four Gospels, which are read and commented on throughout the year at the third nocturn of Matins. Thus, these two seasons of the Church year are simply setting before us in its entirety the New Dispensation, the New Law, as the fulfillment of the promises and the foreshadowings of the Old. We cannot expect to find within such a limited period a satisfactory norm for readings that are to extend throughout the year. But any disadvantage arising from this circumstance is compensated for by our being able to follow the New Testament in its chronological development.

BENEDICT R. AVERY, O.S.B.

To be concluded

THE PROBLEM OF RETRIBUTION IN THE PSALMS¹

The God of the Hebrews was very powerful and very near. He was not only the omnipotent creator: the "maker of heaven and earth, of the sea and all that is in them" (CXLVI.6), but he was active in his creation. He knew all his creatures intimately, preserved them in existence and controlled them in all their doings. So absolute was his power in the government of the world, and so dependent on him were his creatures that everything that happened was attributed directly to him. If a man suffered, it was because God was punishing him (e.g. XXXVIII.3-4). If he prospered, it was because he had won God's favour (e.g. XLIV.4). But though God upheld and cared for all his creatures, he was peculiarly the God and guardian of his people Israel. He had made an explicit covenant with them promising to reward obedience to his commands with the blessings of victory and peace, of prosperity and plenty, and to punish disobedience by poverty and affliction, as the twenty-sixth chapter of *Leviticus* records in detail. And the word of God, once given, stands firm:

My covenant I will not profane,
Neither will I change what is gone forth from my lips. (LXXXIX.35).

Consequently the just man confidently expected to be rewarded with all the temporal benefits that God had pledged himself to bestow, and as confidently expected the wicked to be struck down in his iniquity. He expected to see God rendering "to a man according to his work" (LXII.13), guarding all that love him and destroying all the wicked (CXLV.20). And, since he knew of no revealed doctrine of a future life where wrongs could be righted, he expected the reckoning to take place in this life, before death made it too late. In practice, however, this did not always happen. There were glaring discrepancies between the merits of men and the treatment they received. The wicked flourished: the just suffered. God punished those who had sought to please him, and heaped his blessings on those who had deserved his punishment. For the Hebrew this apparent failure of God's justice was a mystery, an enigma which puzzled him and caused him, very often, great distress. In the *Psalms* this problem, in one form or another, is constantly recurring, demanding an answer.

The first reaction of the just man when calamity came upon him

¹ The Westminster Version with its numbering (according to the Hebrew) has been used for all quotations, except that Yahweh has been substituted for Jehovah.

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was to connect his misfortune with some sin of his that had deserved punishment. Often he confesses that God's infliction of suffering or defeat is no more than he has deserved :

There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation :
There is no health in my bones because of my sins.
For the flood of mine iniquities hath overwhelmed me :
Like a heavy load they are too heavy for me.
My weals stink and fester
Because of my folly. (XXXVIII.4-5 ; cf. CVII.10, 17.)

But sometimes the psalmist is conscious of no sin to which he can attribute his sufferings—at least no sin great enough to merit such punishment, for there is a proportion between sin and its punishment ; the psalmist's principle of justice, as it is God's own principle, is the *Lex Talionis*. Consequently when he sees this disproportion he declares his innocence and asks for justice :

Hear in justness Yahweh, attend to my cry.
Hearken to my prayer uttered with no guileful lips.
Let my vindication go forth from before thee :
Let thine eyes behold aright.
If thou prove my heart, observing it in the night :
If thou try me, thou wilt find in me no evil purposes. . . .
. . . My steps have held fast to thy tracks :
My feet have not slipped. (XVII.1-3, 5.)

Meanwhile, the wicked are reacting in a completely different way to the just man's plight and to God's apparent lack of interest in the doings of men. Their attitude is one which afflicts the just man still further. They laugh at him for trusting in a God who has no care for him :

All that see me mock at me :
They open wide their lips, they wag their heads :
"He committed himself to Yahweh : let him deliver him !
Let him rescue him, for he delighteth in him !" (XXII.8-9.)

This mockery is hard for the just man to bear, not merely because it is a personal attack upon himself, but also because it is a blasphemy against God. In mocking him for having been deceived by God's promises, his mockers impute deception and faithlessness to God who promised, and suggest that he is indifferent to injustice. Acting on this belief they deny God's providence :

The fool [and that means the wicked] hath said in his heart :
There is no God ! (XIV.1.)

That is : there is no God who is interested in man's doings, who cares whether a man keeps the Law or not. We can do what we like :

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They say, "Yahweh seeth not,
Neither doth the God of Jacob perceive." (xciv.7.)

We can say what we like : "Our lips are our own : who is lord over us ?" (xii.5).

God hath forgotten :
He hath hidden his face, he never seeth. (x.ii.)

And indeed it does seem as if God has forgotten, as if he has made void his covenant and deserted his servants. The wicked are encouraged by their uninterrupted success, and the ordinary people seeing it are led to follow their example :

All have turned aside, they are become corrupt together,
There is none that doth good,
There is not even one. (xiv.3 ; cf. lxxiii.10.)

This deplorable state of affairs leads the psalmist to expostulate with God :

Why standest thou afar off, Yahweh,
Hiding thyself in times of distress ? . . .
For the wicked boasteth of his covetousness,
And in his greed curseth, nay, contemneth Yahweh . . .
Arise, Yahweh : O God, lift up thy hand :
Forget not the cry of the needy.
Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God
And say in his heart, "Thou wilt not require it ?" (x.1, 3, 12, 13.)

My Lord, how long wilt thou look on ? (xxxv.17.)

And he calls on God to make it clear to all the world that God is not mocked, and that he is still executing justice, still hating the wicked and frustrating their designs, still loving the just man and bringing him happiness :

Let men know unto the ends of the earth
That God ruleth in Jacob. (lix.14.)

And men shall say, "Verily there is a reward for the just :
Verily there is a God that judgeth on the earth !" (lviii.12.)

Since the only way that men can be brought to see this is by the visible failure and violent overthrow of the wicked, for this the psalmist prays with all his heart :

Condemn them, O God :
Let them fail in their counsels. (v.11.)

Requite them according to their iniquity. (lvi.8.)

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O that thou wouldst slay the wicked, O God . . .
Men who rebel against thee with wicked intent. (CXXXIX.19, 20.)

He speaks against all the workers of iniquity with the language of a violent hatred, and is he not right to do so? Has he not, in fact, a duty to do so? For he is moved not by any spirit of personal revenge, but by zeal for God's honour which his enemies blaspheme. Psalm CXXXIX expresses well the motive behind his savage imprecations:

Do I not hate those who hate thee,
And loathe those who rise up against thee?
With utter hatred I hate them:
To me they are enemies. (CXXXIX.21, 22.)

Such an attitude is a natural result of the vehemence of his desire to see God vindicating his good name, fulfilling his promises and manifesting his justice, and a sign of the firmness of the confidence with which he believes that God is just and faithful, and the irreconcilable enemy of evil.

This confidence is the constant theme of the psalmist. It is perhaps the dominant characteristic of the psalter. God is God, the unshakable rock of justice. He stands firm however men rebel against him. However injustice seems to be successful, his justice will inevitably prevail. Sometimes this confidence is so great that it allows no room for any doubt or impatience or anxiety.

God is our refuge and our strength,
A very present help in troubles:
Therefore shall we not fear, though the earth should change,
And the mountains be moved into the heart of the seas. (XLI.2, 3.)

For Yahweh will not abandon his people,
Neither will he forsake his possession:
For judgement shall again be just,
And all the upright of heart shall follow it. (XCIV.14, 15.)

The first answer of the just man, then, to the problem of the apparent failure of God's retributive justice is: "Trust in God". This is not strictly an answer at all. Rather it is a refusal to admit that a problem exists. It may be that appearances suggest that justice has failed, but in reality, so long as God is God, justice cannot fail, for "God is a just judge" (VII.12). In spite of all appearance he will eventually punish the wicked and reward the just as their works deserve.

But there are times when evil is so triumphantly successful that the psalmist cannot deny that there is a problem to be answered. On

these occasions, in order to sustain his own confidence and to counteract the envious longings of the common people, he works out his answer in more detail. In Psalm XLIX, for example, the psalmist, speaking as a teacher, encourages his hearers not to exchange God's protection for the protection that wealth can give. He recognizes in his solemn announcement to "all the dwellers in the world" which introduces the Psalm that the subject is one which puzzles men :

I will incline mine ear to a mystery :
I will expound a riddle upon the lyre. (XLIX.5.)

Why do worldly men who ignore God enjoy such untroubled security? On the face of it, it seems as if a happy life is ensured by the possession of wealth and not by obedience to God.

The psalmist's answer is that wealth, in spite of its apparent power, is frail and helpless, and the wealthy man, in spite of his apparent stability, is "like the chaff, which the wind driveth away" (1.4).

For the man in honour abideth not :
He is like to the beasts that pass away. (XLIX.13, 21.)

For all his wealth he must one day die and leave his goods to another :

For the ransom of a life is too costly,
And shall never be paid. (v. 9.)

Though he may have lived in affluence :

And men praised him, because it went well with him,
Yet shall he go to the abode of his fathers,
Who shall nevermore see the light.
The man in honour abideth not :
He is like to the beasts that pass away. (vv. 19-21.)

Since wealth is powerless to overcome death, it would be folly to prefer its protection to that of God, who has power over life and death. God can and will do for the just man what wealth cannot do for the rich man :

But my life God will ransom
From the power of the nether-world,
For he will take me. (v. 16.)

In Psalm XXXVII it is again this aspect of the illusory and transient character of the wicked's prosperity that the psalmist emphasises. First comes the acknowledgement of the temptation to envy the wicked their prosperity, and of the danger of becoming exasperated by it.

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Fret not thyself because of evil-doers :
Be not jealous of the workers of unrighteousness. (XXXVII.1.)

Desist from anger, and forsake wrath :
Vex not thyself—it leadeth but to evil. (v. 8.)

And again the constant advice to have confidence is given :

Trust in Yahweh, and do good. (v. 3.)

Be resigned to Yahweh, and hope in him. (v. 7.)

In the rest of the psalm the psalmist provides the reasons for trust, developing at some length the double theme that :

Evil doers shall be cut off,
But they who look to Yahweh shall possess the land. (v. 9.)

This is the refrain of his song.

First, the success of the wicked is short-lived,

For the wicked shall perish,
And their seed shall beg bread :
Yea, the enemies of Yahweh shall be as the splendour of the meadows :
They shall vanish as smoke. (v. 20.)

Secondly, by contrast, the reward of the just is lasting,

For Yahweh loveth right,
And forsaketh not his pious ones.
The unrighteous shall be destroyed for ever,
And the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
The just shall possess the land,
And shall dwell thereon for ever. (vv. 28-9.)

This contrast between the seed of the wicked begging bread and being cut off and that of the just dwelling on the land forever was a consoling one for the Hebrews. For even though the wicked man himself lived out his days unscathed, yet if he suffered in his posterity the balance of justice was redressed, for a man was considered to live on in his children, they were part of him, an extension of himself.

This second answer which the just man gives, or rather the considerations with which he supports his confidence, namely that the prosperity of the wicked will not last forever, does not explain the mystery. It provides a persuasive argument against the temptation to envy, by showing that anything so ephemeral as the prosperity of the wicked is not enviable when compared with the unfailing permanence of the blessings that are bestowed by God. It is however essentially a negative answer. It teaches that the wicked man is not as happy as

he appears, but it does not explain why he should be happy at all, nor, still less, why the just man should be suffering.

There is, however, a fuller and more positive answer, which is best put forward in Psalm LXXIII. In this psalm the psalmist has felt the force of the temptation acutely. He has in fact been so sorely tempted by the prosperity and unchecked violence of the wicked that he declares that he was on the point of giving up his belief in God's goodness to those who kept his commandments. All his painful efforts to live a good life seemed to him to have been a waste of time :

My feet had almost stumbled,
My steps had wellnigh slipped :
For I was envious of the boasters,
When I beheld the prosperity of the wicked. (LXXIII.2, 3.)

Surely in vain have I kept my heart clean,
And have washed my hands in innocence !
For I am stricken all the day,
And chastised every morning. (vv. 13, 14.)

He struggled against this temptation to despair, but it remained a perplexity in his eyes (v. 16), until in the Temple God revealed to him the truth. In the light of the revelation he sees the folly of his envying the wicked, for, in the first place, the wicked are doomed to a sudden and unhappy end [so much is a repetition of the argument in Psalm XXXVII and Psalm XLIX]. But, secondly (and this is the positive teaching), the just man, whether he prospers or not, merely by possessing God possesses the highest good that any man is capable of. In one of the most beautiful passages of the psalter the psalmist tells of the transcendent happiness of his companionship with God :

Yet am I always with Thee :
Thou holdest my right hand.
Thou guidest me with thy counsel,
And afterwards shalt receive me into glory.
What have I in heaven but thee ?
And having Thee, I delight in nought upon earth.
My flesh and my heart faileth,
But God is my portion for ever. (vv. 23-6.)

Here the psalmist is not merely trusting in God to punish the wicked and reward the just at some future date. He sees in the flash of revelation that, here and now, for all his prosperity, the wicked man is miserable, and that the just man for all his suffering is, here and now, happy, made blessed by his possession of the greatest good. Already in Psalm XXXVII.16 the sentiment is expressed :

Better is the little of the just
Than the great abundance of the wicked.

And this insight into the true nature of things is shown also in Psalm xvii, where the psalmist contrasts his own desire for God with the worldly ambitions of carnal men. His portion is God, but their—

... portion in life is of this time,
Whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure,
Who are satisfied with sons,
And bequeath their abundance to their children.
But myself, in justness may I behold thy face,
May I be satisfied, upon awaking, with thy form. (xvii, 14, 15.)

The wicked, that is, enjoy all those earthly blessings commonly regarded as being the reward of God's favour. But these in the psalmist's view do not compare with the possession of God, their source. He has seen, at last, that though these benefits are signs of God's favour, they do not constitute it, and he has realised that the reality of God's favour is far more precious than any external sign of it.

It is true that he was sometimes bewildered and saddened by the reflection that this ineffable companionship with God must one day come to an end in the dark silence of Sheol (e.g. xxxix ; lxxxix.47 sqq.), for that was the only doctrine of an after life to which he could appeal. Yet in spite of the incomprehensible separation from God that he expected death to bring he is so carried away in his moments of exaltation, so vividly conscious of the truth that God is the greatest good, and life with him the only true happiness, that death fades from his view. Some commentators (e.g. Mgr Bird on Psalm lxxiii in the *Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*) believe that in these moments of inspiration the psalmist found and expressed the solution to the problem of retribution in rewards and punishments after this life. If this be so then the Psalms contain the fullest and most complete answer to the problem that man can give, and the psalmist was the first of the inspired writers in the Old Testament to attain to a knowledge of the truth. Other Catholic writers, however (e.g. E. F. Sutcliffe, s.j. *The Old Testament and the Future Life*), give good reasons for believing that this claim cannot be maintained, and it seems most probable that the psalmist did not envisage any future state of happiness that would compensate for present sorrow. If he did not, then the solution he gives, although less complete, is even more admirable. Without any concrete hope of future settlement, without any promise of reward, he acts with utter purity of intention. He expects no reward and asks for none. His only desire is to be with God. He has known and savoured the truth that

For me, to approach unto God is good. (lxxiii.28.)

And absorbed in that truth he prescind from death and Sheol, and sets earthly prosperity at naught. He has learnt, in the sublime words of Psalm LXXIII.4, that "Thy kindness is better than life".

This then is the profoundest and most satisfying answer to the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the just that the Psalms contain. Without knowledge of a future life of reward and punishment, it was not possible for the psalmist to give the only completely satisfactory solution to the problem. Yet in spite of the limitations of the revelation made to him, he possessed in his recognition that God was the source of all good and friendship with him the supreme happiness of man, an answer which not only set at rest all his own troubled questionings, but which, in God's providence, was the seed from which sprang the fruit of the later revelation of eternal happiness with God.

Thou makest known to me the way of life :
In thy presence is fulness of joys,
In thy right hand are delights for evermore. (XVI.II.)

BERNARD HALL, S.J.

BOOK REVIEWS

L. Hugues Vincent, O.P., *Jérusalem de l'Ancien Testament. Recherches d'archéologie et d'histoire*. Vol. I, *Archéologie de la Ville*. Gabalda, Paris 1954. Pp. xii+372 (with a separate album of 100 loose maps, plans and plates). Price £10 10s.

It would be a fascinating if laborious task to draw up a complete list of guides to the Holy Land, and not a few of the items would be entirely and hopelessly out-of-date. Among more recent works, all published before the Second World War but all still of considerable value, one might single out the latest edition (the third, of 1934) of Sir Harry Luke and Mr E. Keith-Roach's *The Handbook of Palestine and Trans-jordan*, noteworthy for its statistics and for the detailed "Notes by Road and Rail" that so agreeably assist a traveller through the Land; Mr H. V. Morton's *In the Steps of the Master*, which burns with a steady and compelling enthusiasm for Palestine and its many glories; and the French "Guide Bleu" for *Syrie-Palestine, Iraq & Transjordanie* (Paris 1932), which owes the section on the Holy Land proper to the skill and experience of the late Père François-Marie Abel, O.P., author of standard works on the geography and political history of Palestine, and of many volumes in collaboration with Père Hugues Vincent, of the same Order. It was while revising this section of the "Guide Bleu" for a second edition that Père Abel died at his work-table in the Dominican house in Jerusalem, the Couvent de Saint-Etienne. *Lux perpetua luceat ei*.

The work now under review is indeed a guide, but it is a very special sort of guide, written not for beginners in Palestinian archaeology and history, but for those who already know something of the terrain and are prepared to follow some fairly stiff lessons in architecture, stratigraphy and other sciences. The book as a whole, then issued under the single-word title *Jérusalem*, was originally planned by Pères Vincent and Abel in the early years of the century, and the first fascicle appeared in 1912 with the sub-heading *Topographie*, and was concerned with Jerusalem in Old Testament times. Later, before and after the First War, came sections on the City in New Testament times, but the Old Testament portion remained incomplete until the present year. Between 1918 and 1939 so many sites were excavated in the Holy City and its environs that one may be grateful for the decision to wait for a period of comparative quiet before issuing the final volumes.

The volume now published does not return to the subject of the topography, which was satisfactorily discussed in the fascicle of 1912. It is concerned rather with archaeology, the archaeology of the city in the Old Testament period, and the second and concluding part is to contain the detailed treatment of the temple and temple area. When I was a student at Saint-Etienne in 1922-4, we all enjoyed a series of unforgettable, brilliant, almost dramatic lectures from Père Vincent on the Temple, and doubtless I have not been alone in hoping, at various moments during the thirty years intervening, that a time would come when the lectures, and very much more than the lectures, would be definitively published with all the necessary plans and illustrations. In the meantime, we have this admirable survey of the walls and towers of Jerusalem, with sections on the palaces, on the Ophel vertical tunnel, on the royal tombs, on the necropolis in the royal period, on the monuments of the Cedron valley, and on the so-called "Tomb of the Kings" which is, in truth, not the sepulchre of the kings of Juda, but that of Helen of Adiabene, a Jewish proselyte, who died in or about the year A.D. 65. I may be allowed to recall that a distinguished prelate, who once visited the tomb in my company, expressed great satisfaction that the bare rock had been allowed to remain bare, and had not, as is the way with so many things in Jerusalem, been encrusted with marble, alabaster or precious stones!

Once again, this is not a book to be read without considerable effort. Like the masterly *Revue Biblique* itself it does not fall within the category of light reading. But for those who are prepared to make the effort it will add immensely to their knowledge of Jerusalem and the many problems of its growth and arrangement. Many of the plates in the separate album are reproductions of actual photographs, a large proportion of which bear the legend "Cliché Savignac", thus recalling to our minds the kindly and learned Père Raphael, who will remain always associated with this fine work on Jerusalem, the City of the Great King.

JOHN M. T. BARTON

Neil Kevin, *Out of Nazareth*. Clonmore & Reynolds, Dublin 1953. Pp. 134. 9s 6d.

Mr Kevin, who has already made his name as a brilliant essayist in *I Remember Maynooth* and *No Applause in Church*, here ventures into the New Testament, and offers a series of twenty scenes from the Gospels. His aim has been to read between the lines of the Evangelists in an attempt to let the persons of whom they write appear as real

living beings and not as the flat and inanimate figures that they tend to become when framed in chapter and verse, footnote and comment. He insists therefore on re-reading the scenes slowly, on living over again the feelings and reactions of the people involved, and on letting the full import of each detail sink in before allowing himself to pass on to the next. "In our own interest we should make much of those obvious pauses in the Gospel story though they be marked by neither sign or comment in the text. This is a time to keep our eye off the next verse and wait and watch with the stilled crowd while the Son of God, seeming not to use his divine way of knowing, looks inquiringly from face to face. . . ." (p. 49). "Our state is blessed if in our imagination we can find ourselves listening to it along with the first audience, hearing it bit by bit, sharing their feeling when they knew that the younger son was starving in a far country but knew not yet how the story would end. . . ." (p. 84). The style and approach are interesting throughout, and the practical applications made with great skill.

The feeling is nevertheless left at times that Mr Kevin might have benefited considerably from a little more biblical instruction. One can appreciate his gibes at the commentaries which in their soulless criticism of the text have so often missed the beauty of it. But at least they would not have made the mistake of taking Christ's words on the Kingdom of Heaven as a definition of the after-life instead of a description of the régime which he came to establish on earth; of ingenuously taking the words "Martha, Martha" as a divinely inspired repetition, pregnant with hidden meaning ("... each single word is a visitation of our earth, an angel disguised as a human sound. . . . The profundities of the human mind are little when set beside the most casual-seeming sounds that dropped from the lips of Christ"); of suggesting that Mark's addition of "Timaeus's son" to "Bartimaeus" was "perhaps because there was a confusing number of Bartimaeuses"; of finding it significant that the woman with the issue of blood is the only woman in the Gospels called "Daughter" by Christ. . . . But then one must allow a preacher his licence. Certainly elsewhere the book shows a deep insight into human character and will help its readers to a fuller appreciation of the Gospel scenes which it describes.

With deference to certain critics, one may be allowed to point out the misprint of "sat" for "set" on page 45, and of "Jerusalem" for "Jericho" on page 93.

H. J. RICHARDS